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I.—THE HOUSE-DOOR IN GREEK AND ROMAN RELIGION AND FOLK-LORE.

The important part which the threshold and the house-door play in the folk-lore and religion of various peoples¹ led me to inquire whether they were of equal importance among the Greeks and Romans. I have collected, therefore, what is, I trust, a fairly complete list of references in Greek and Latin literature to superstitions connected with the threshold and the door. The references show that the most prominent belief in connection with them was that spirits haunted their vicinity. A theory, then, which will logically account for the presence of these spirits should furnish a simple and sufficient explanation for the important character of the door-way in religion and folklore.

One of the most common² superstitions connected with the threshold is that to stumble thereon betokens bad luck. This belief was current among the Romans and, I believe, among the Greeks also, although the evidence in the case of the latter is scanty. There is recorded a saying of Pythagoras³ that "If you

¹ Cf. especially Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, and the references cited below.

² For this superstition among other peoples, cf. Trumbull, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 sq.; Brand, *Pop. Antiq. Index*, s. v. *Stumbling*; Aubrey, *Remaines of Gentil. and Judaisme*, ed. Britten, Lond., 1881, p. 56; Winternitz, *Denkschr. Wien. Akad. d. Wiss.* XL, 1892, p. 71; Haltrich, *Volkskund. d. Siebenburg. Sachsen*, p. 316; Wuttke, *Deutsch. Volksab.*, pp. 396; 471; Conder, *Heth and Moab*, pp. 293-4; Marco Polo, *Bk. II*, ch. 13, with Yule's note, vol. 1, pp. 341 sq.

³ Mullach, *Fr. Gr. Phil.* 2, p. 510; cf. Frazer, *Folk-Lore Jour.* (London), I, p. 156. These words of Pythagoras do not necessarily prove that this superstition was Greek; it may have been Italic.

stumble upon the threshold on going out, you should turn back"; and Plut. refers to the same belief in the life of Demetrius as well as in the lives of the Romans, Ti. Gracchus and Crassus:

Demetr. 29, 2: Ἀντίγονος δὲ . . . ἐξὶὼν προσέπταισεν ὥστε πεσεῖν . . . ἀναστὰς δὲ . . . ἡττήσατο νίκην παρὰ τῶν θεῶν.

Tiber. Gracch. 17, 3: πρὶν ἐξελθεῖν προσέπταισε πρὸς τὸν οὐδὸν σφοδρὰς οὕτω πληγῆς γενομένης ὥστε τὸν μὲν ὄνυχα . . . ῥαγῆναι.

Cras. 17, 6: ἐξιόντων γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ πρῶτος ἐσφάλῃ κατὰ τὰς πύλας ὁ νεανίας Κράσσος, εἴτ' ἐπ' αὐτῷ περιπεσὼν ὁ πρεσβύτερος.

In Roman literature we find the following references to this omen:

Cic. de div. 2, 40, 84: quae si suscipiamus, pedis offensio nobis et abruptio corrigiae et sternumenta erunt observanda. And so Pl. N. H. 2, 24 puts "offensiones pedum"¹ among omens.

Tibull. 1, 3, 19: quotiens ingressus iter mihi tristia dixi/offensum in porta signa dedisse pedem.

Id. 1, 7, 62: te canit agricola e magna cum venerit urbe/serus inoffensum rettuleritque pedem.

Ov. Am. 1, 12, 3: omina sunt aliquid. Modo cum discedere vellet/ad limen digitos restitit icta Nape.

Id. Her. 13, 85: cum foribus velles ad Troiam exire paternis/pes tuus offenso limine signa dedit.

Id. Trist. 3, 4, 33: nam pede inoffenso spatium decurrere vitae/dignus es et fato candidiore frui.

Id. M. 10, 452: ter pedis offensi signo est revocata, ter omen/funereus bubo letali carmine fecit; cf. Trist. 1, 3, 55.

Verg. Aen. 2, 242 seems to have had the same idea in mind when he says of the wooden horse: quater ipso in limine portae/substitit atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.

Valer. Max. 1, 4, 2: Ti. Gracchus . . . auspicia . . . petiit, quae illi perquam tristia responderunt: et ianua egressus ita pedem offendit ut digitus ei decuteretur. This incident is also referred to by Plut. Ti. Gr. 17, 3 (cf. above), and Jul. Obs. 86.

Petron. 132: podagrici pedibus suis maledicunt, chiragrici manibus, lippi oculis et qui offenderunt saepe digitos, quidquid doloris habent, in pedes deferunt. There are also two other

¹Stumbling elsewhere than on the threshold seems to have been a bad omen; cf. Eurip. Heracl. 730; Valer. Max. 1, 5, 2, of Camillus: subito lapso decidit, quod omen ad damnationem qua postea oppressus est; ib. 1, 6, 6; Suet. Caes. 59; August. de doct. christ. 2, 20, 31.

passages which may refer to this belief, but their fragmentary condition renders a definite decision impossible:

Novius, Macc. Ex. fr. 2 (Ribb. 2, p. 262): *limen superum quod mei misero saepe confregit caput/inferum autem digitos omnis ubi ego defregi meos.*

Petron. 138: *evasi tamen omnibus digitis inter praecipitem decursum cruentatis.*

To prevent the bride from stumbling on the threshold and thus to avoid the bad omen is one of the reasons given by the ancients to explain the Roman¹ custom of lifting her over the threshold of her husband's house. This custom is referred to by the following writers:

Plaut. Cas. 815: *super attolle limen pedes mea nova nupta: sospes iter incipe hoc ut viro tuo semper sis superstes.*

Varro ap. Serv. Verg. Ecl. 8, 29: (*sponsas*) *ideo limen ait non tangere ne a sacrilegio inchoarent si depositurae virginitem calcent rem Vestae, i. e. numini castissimo consecratam.* For the latter statement, cf. Myth. Vat. 3, 12, 2; Serv. Aen. 2, 467; 6, 273.

Catull. 61, 166: *transfer omine cum bono/limen aureolos pedes.*

Luc. Phar. 2, 359: *turritaque premens frontem matrona corona/tralata vetuit contingere limina planta.*

Isid. Or. 9, 7, 12: *uxores dictae quasi unxiores: quae ideo vetebantur limina calcare quod illic ianuæ et coeant et separantur* (cf. Ellis' note on Catull., l. 1.).

Plut. Rom. Quaes. 29: *διὰ τί τὴν γαμουμένην οὐκ ἔωσιν αὐτὴν ὑπερβῆναι τὸν οὐδὸν τῆς οἰκίας, ἀλλ' ὑπεραίρουσιν οἱ προπέμποντες;*

Id. Romul. 15, 5: *διαμένει δὲ μέχρι νῦν τὸ τὴν νύμφην αὐτὴν ἀφ' αὐτῆς μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν τὸν οὐδὸν εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον.*

Modern authorities² are inclined to adopt this explanation of the ancients and surely the analogous practices of other peoples would seem to point to the avoidance of the bad omen of stumb-

¹ So among the ancient Hindoos a bride was forbidden to stand on the threshold; cf. Grihya Sutras, Sacr. Bks. of the East, XXX, pp. 193, 263; and lifting the bride is common in many parts of the world; cf. Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 36 sq.

² Adopted by Bekker Gall.³ 2, pp. 26, 46; Crooke, The Lifting of the Bride, F-L Jour. 13, 1902, pp. 238 sq.; Prel.-Jord. R. M. 2, 217; Winternitz, l. 1; Eitrem, Hermes u. die Toten, p. 14. The other view suggested by Plut., l. 1., that the custom was a survival typifying the capture of the bride is defended by Rossbach, Röm. Ehe, p. 359; but cf. Marq.-Momm. Privatl., p. 55, n. 11.

ling as the main motive; we are safe, at least, in concluding that upon the threshold¹ lurked some danger to the bride, danger which she could escape by not treading thereon.²

What, then, is the explanation of this dangerous character of the threshold, emphasized as it is by the bad omen of stumbling upon it as well as by the necessity of lifting the bride over it? In the case of other peoples the explanation is clearly to be found in the idea that spirits haunted the vicinity of the house-door; and if it can be shown that this idea was current among the Greeks and Romans also, the same explanation surely will suffice. That it was, is seen from the fact that beneath the threshold, or on the door, were placed prophylactic substances to protect the house from evil spirits, and that the threshold, or the vicinity of the door, was the place for performing all sorts of magic rites, which are, in the last analysis, generally concerned with the spirits of the dead.

We read in Pl. N. H. 29, 67: *draconis caput limini ianuarum subditum propitiatis dis*³ *fortunatam domum facere promittitur*; and again, 30, 82: *contra omnia mala medicamenta, item sanguinem canis respersis parietibus genitaleque eius sub limine ianuae defossum*. Likewise in Geop. 15, 8, 1, *μελισσῶν σμήνη μὴ φαρμακοῦσθαι*, Leontinus recommends that the right hoof of a black ass be buried under the threshold of the hive, and sprinkled over with pine-resin, salt, cumin, sea-onion, and among other things, the

¹ In modern Greece, the bride is lifted over the threshold to keep from stumbling upon it, which is considered bad luck; Wachsmuth, *Das alte Gr. im neuen*, p. 97. Among the Manchus the bride is carried into the groom's house in a sedan chair, after crackers have been fired before the door to drive away spirits; F-L Jour. 1, p. 487. In the Punjab, small bundles of cotton are laid upon the threshold, on which the bride steps as she crosses it, *ib.* 9 (1898), p. 153; among the western Somali tribes a sacrifice of a goat or a sheep is made on the threshold, and the bride steps over it as she enters; a similar custom is recorded of the Bedouins; cf. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins*, p. 151; cf. also F-L Jour. 1, p. 459. Other examples in Trumbull, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 sq.

² Whether this idea gave rise to the custom of crossing the threshold with the right foot (Petron. 30), is doubtful; the right foot was the proper one to start with not only when about to enter a house or temple (cf. Verg. A. 8, 302; Iambl. V. Py. 28, 156), but when beginning a journey (cf. Juv. 10, 5; Apul. M. 1, 5; Hor. Ep. 2, 2, 37), and even, according to Pythagoras (Iambl. V. Py. 18), when putting on shoes.

³ By "dis" we are to understand chthonic powers, if Pliny did not; cf. *ib.* 25, 50 with 25, 109 and Theophr. h. pl. 9, 8, 7.

πανσπερμία. Colum. 7, 5, 17 advises that when a flock of sheep is suffering from disease, one of them should be buried alive in a ditch dug on the threshold, and the rest of the flock driven over it. In a fragment of Aristoph. Dan. 255 K, a sea-onion is buried under the threshold, and according to Pl. N. H. 20, 101, Pythagoras recommended the same means for preventing "malorum medicamentorum introitum";¹ Dios. 2, 202 describes this plant as ἀλεξιφάρμακον ὄλη πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν κρεμαμένη, cf. Geop. 15, 1, 31: πάντα φθόγον καὶ ἐπιβουλήν ἐλαύνει . . ἡ σκίλλα ξηραίνομένη, καὶ ἐν τῷ προθύρῳ τῆς οἰκίας κειμένη. During the Greek Anthesteria, when the spirits of the dead were about,² and at the time of child-birth, when also danger was feared from them,³ the Athenian anointed his doors with pitch and chewed buckthorn,⁴—a plant which was also hung before house-doors "to repel the evil arts of the magicians", Dios. 1, 119, and as an aid against φάρμακα καὶ φαντάσματα, Schol. Nicand. Ther. 860. The same ideas led the Roman to strike his door-posts and threshold thrice with branches of the arbutus-tree in order to keep out "striges" (Ov. F. 6, 155); and to hang a frog on the door of the granary for the protection of the grain (Pl. 18, 303). Pliny, 29, 83, also tells us that a bat serves as an amulet if hung by its feet to the lintel of the sheep-fold; and again (32, 44), that the "stella marina", if smeared with the blood of a fox and fastened by an iron nail to the lintel of the door, prevents the entry of "mala medicamenta". For a similar reason,—"*ne quid mali medicamenti inferretur*"—it was the custom for newly-wedded brides to anoint the door-posts with wolf's fat (Pl. 28, 142; cf. ib. 28, 135). Pliny likewise states, in writing of the virtues of iron (34, 151), that nails⁵ torn from graves and fastened to the threshold have power against "nocturnae lymphationes"; and (28, 85), that the tricks of the Magi are brought to naught "*tactis—menstruo⁶ postibus*"; the

¹ Similarly in Szekely lore, cows are thought to be protected against witchcraft by placing garlic over the door or into a hole in the threshold; cf. F-L Jour. 21, 1884, p. 104; also pp. 330-331. ² Cf. Rohde, Psy. 1, p. 237.

³ Cf. Pl. N. H. 28, 247 sq.; August. de civ. dei 6, 9.

⁴ Cf. Phot. s. v. *Μαρά ἡμέρα* and *ράμνος*; Rohde, l. l., n. 3; Harrison, Prol., p. 39; Samter, Familienf., p. 113; Eitrem, op. cit., p. 22.

⁵ For nails in magic, cf. Pl. 26, 24; 28, 46; Pallad. 4, 10, 4. The fact that these were taken from a grave added to their power; cf. Pl. 28, 140; 226; Apul. M. 3, 17; cf. Theocr. 5, 121; Ov. Her. 6, 89; Prop. 4, 5, 29.

⁶ For this as prophylactic, cf. Pl. 28, 77 sq.; Frazer, Golden Bough 1, 170; 2, 225 sq.

same end was also gained,—28, 104,—by affixing a mixture of barley and blood to the posts. In order to turn all men's hatred against an enemy, says Pl. 28, 117, the intestines of a chameleon should be mixed with monkey's urine and affixed to his door. The same authority also tells us,—28, 86,—that if a person, who is suffering from fever, fastens the clippings from his finger and toe nails to another's door, the ailment will be transferred to him. On the door, too, were written magic verses to keep out weasels (Geop. 13, 15, 8), the word ἄδαμ to keep serpents away (Geop. 13, 8, 4; 14, 5), and the words "arse verse"¹ to protect the house from fire. So the ill-omened birds that fly in the night were hung on the door to protect the house from lightning (Colum. de cult. hort. 346; Pallad. 1, 35, 1), or as Apul. (M. 3, 23) puts it: "ut quod infaustis volatibus familiae minantur exitium, suis luant cruciatibus". In like manner, when a hail-storm threatened, a crocodile's skin was hung up at the entrance of the house (Pallad. 1, 35, 14; Geop. 1, 14, 5).² And the same ideas prompted the inhabitants of the early cities of Greece and Italy to sculpture phalli on the lintel of the city gates.³ The custom, too, of having the threshold of bronze⁴ may have been due to the belief in the prophylactic properties of this metal.⁵

In the case of many of these practices it may be objected that the prophylactic substance was hung before the door because through the door the powers of ill would enter no matter whence they came; thus in Ovid F. 6, 165 spina alba is placed in the window to keep out the striges, after the door-posts and the threshold have been struck thrice with branches of the arbute

¹ Cf. Otto, Sprichw. n. 172; Riess, Art. Aberglaube, Pauly-Wiss. 1.

² This custom of placing prophylactic substances under the threshold or on the door is common among all peoples, and numerous examples are cited by Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 14 sq. Among the Magyars a love charm consists in burying "three beans and three bulbs of garlic and a few pieces of dried coal and a dead frog" under the threshold, Jones and Kropfs, Folk-Tales of the Magyars, p. 332; cf. Turner, Samoa, pp. 21, 56 sq.; Jour. Am. F-L. 12, 126. In ancient Assyria amulets with curses and charms upon them were buried beneath the threshold, Maspero, Life in Anc. Egypt and Assyria, pp. 195, 219.

³ Cf. Dennis, Cit. and Cem. of Etrur. 2, 109.

⁴ Paus. 9, 19, 7; cf. Hom. Od. 7, 83 sq.; cf. the threshold of the various entrances to Hades, at Kolonos, e. g., Soph. O. C. 56 sq. and Gruppe, G. M. 895, n. 1.

⁵ Cf. Arch. f. Religionsw. 10, 1907, p. 41.

tree, and the door-way has been sprinkled with water,—methods, clearly, of riddance. In the following examples, however, there is no question of the spirits entering the house, but only of the necessity for their presence that the magic rite may be effective. In the love charm in Theocr. 2, 59 sq. the magic herbs are smeared on the threshold, and in the corresponding passage in Vergil's 8th Ecl. vs. 93, the garments left behind by the fickle Daphnis, "dear pledges of himself", are buried under the threshold. According to Ps.-Theod. Prisc. Add., p. 281, 22 (Rose), *canis numquam rabiet in domo, si pellem canis rabiosi sub limen oblige vel in porta figas*. With these passages may be compared Pap. Mag. Mus. Lugd. Bat. J. 384, III, 1 (Dieterich, p. 799): *Ἐργαστήριον εὖ πράσσειν. ἐπὶ φῶυ ὄρνιθος ἀρσενικοῦ ἐπίγραφε καὶ κατόρυξον πρὸς τὸν οὐδόν . . . ἥδε εὐχή τοῦ φῶυ ὁ μέγας θεός, δός μοι χάριν, πρᾶξιν καὶ τόφω τούτῳ, ὅπου κείται τὸ φόν, ἐν ᾧ οἶκῳ πραγματεύομαι*. Hence the threshold plays a very prominent part in medicinal lore. We read in Marc. Emp. 2, 4: *emicranium statim curant vermes terreni*¹ *pari numero sinistra manu lecti et in limine cum terra de limine eadem manu triti et cum aceto optimo eadem manu fronti vel temporibus inliti*. In other cases the patient must be standing on or near the threshold² when he takes the magic remedy, as in Marc. Emp. 14, 66: *picem mollem cerebro eius inpone, qui uvam dolebit, praecipe ut super limen stans superiori limini ipsam picem capite suo adfigat*; ib. 16, 21: *ieiunus—per dies continuos novem in limine stans bibe*; ib. 23, 35, for disorders of the spleen, a person is to drink *ebuli radicem, quam sine ferro evellas, in limine stans contra orientem per triduum ieiunus*, cf. Ps.-Theod. Prisc. Add., p. 324, 5. Similarly in 4, 27, a person who is to take a concoction used to cure porrigo, *supra limen adsistat idque triduo faciat*. Ps.-Theod. Prisc. Add., p. 345, 14: *ut cito pariat mulier, scribes in limine superiore ostii Oceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit*; ib. 323, 27: *lacertam viridem in vase fictili novo mittes, et per medium limen pendeat, ubi spleniticus manet, et condes*. *Dum exit sive ingreditur, idem vas tangat mox ab eo morbo libera-*

¹ Earth-worms were commonly used as a remedy, cf. Marc. Emp. 9, 64; 84; 108; 14, 23 sq.

² So in Tuscany at the present time, folk remedies are taken on the threshold; cf. Leland, *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*, pp. 282, 321.

bitur.¹ The hinge, also, and other parts of the door were used in similar practices. Marc. Emp. 1, 65: *glebular de limine vel ipso cardine erasas cum aceto simul permisce eoque luto frontem inline, quo caput confestim gravissimo dolore relevabis.* So Pl. 28, 49, recommends the dirt from the door-hinges for headache. Marc. Emp. 28, 37: *ad ventris dolorem remedium efficax sic: sordes de cardine ostii tolle digitis duobus, pollice et medicinali, et super umbilicum laborantis adpone.* Ib. 17, 48, *ad reumaticos: sordium aut pulveris . . . in foramine, in quo ianuae pessuli descendunt, quidquid reppereris collige . . . et tacite vel occulto loco in potionem aut cibum . . . insperge.* The key also was prophylactic; cf. Geop. 1, 14, 6: *εἰ δὲ καὶ κλειδιά πολλὰ διαφόρων οἰκημάτων κύκλῳ τοῦ χωρίου ἐν σχοινοῖς ἀπαρτήσεις, παρέλεύσεται ἡ χάλαζα.* And through the key-hole² Hermes makes his way in Hom. Hy. 3, 146. The presence of spirits around the door-way is distinctly implied, moreover, in a practice described by Ps.-Apul. de virt. herb. 7: *si quis devotatus defixusque fuerit in suis nuptiis sic eum resolves; herbae pedis leonis frutices numero septem sine radicibus decoque cum aqua, luna decrescente, lavato eum, et te ipsum qui facis, ante limen extra domum prima nocte, et herbam incende aristolochiam et suffumigato eum et redito ad domum et ne post vos respiciatis, resolvisti eum.* The warning "Look not behind you" is an invariable sign³ of the presence of spirits, for it was dangerous even to catch sight of them. Similar evidence is furnished by a passage in Pl. 20, 6, where he writes: *putant . . . adiuvari . . . partus . . . si in arietis lana adligatum (elaterium)*

¹ Although many of these practices seem to rest upon the common folk belief that diseases can be transferred to objects which are brought into contact with the patient, this idea alone will not explain why the threshold should be chosen as the place where the object should be buried, or where the magic rite should be performed. The Law of Sympathy requires simply that such an object should be buried, so that, as it decays, sickness may cease. Nor can we say that in the practice quoted from the *Additamenta* the vase was suspended from the lintel because the patient would touch it, on this account, most frequently; cf. the English custom of driving a nail in the lintel to cure toothache, *F-L Jour.* 6, 1895, p. 158.

² Cf. Hom. Od. 4, 802 where the *εἰδῶλον ἐς θάλαμον δ' εἰσῆλθε παρὰ κληίδος ἱμάντα*. Cf. Gruppe, *G. M.* 1295, n. 3; Eitrem, *op. cit.*, 37-8. He compares the German saying (Wuttke², *D. V.*, § 297; § 753): "Wenn ein Schlüssel aus dem Thürschloss fällt, sterbe jemand im Hause".

³ Cf. Theocr. 24, 94; Ap. Rh. 3, 1039; Ov. F. 5, 443 sq.; Pl. 29, 91; Eustath. ad Hom. Od. 22, 481, p. 1934-5; Rohde, *Psy.* 2, 85.

inscientis lumbis fuerit, ita ut protinus ab enixu rapiatur extra domum. The last words can only mean that the remedy was thought of as a purificatory substance which, as often, was thrown out as an offering to the spirits of the dead.¹ This may explain why in Philostr. vit. Ap. 3, 39, 2, a hare which was used at the same critical moment had to be carried quickly without the door.² St. August. de civ. dei 6, 9, quoting Varro, has preserved for us another interesting practice in connection with child-birth: mulieri fetae post partum tres deos commemorat adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circumire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis. With this use of the broom we may compare the custom of sweeping out a house after a corpse had been removed;³ the mortar,⁴ and doubtless the pestle, also, and the axe⁴ were both prophylactic and occur in other folk practices. There are, further, two passages in Ovid which clearly illustrate this idea that spirits haunted the vicinity of the thresh-old; in Met. 7, 235 sq., when Medea is making her preparations to rejuvenate Aeson, constitit adveniens citra limenque foresque, / et tantum caelo tegitur: . . . statuitque aras e caespite binas / dexteriore Hecates, ast laeva parte Iuventae. / . . . haud procul egesta scrobibus tellure duabus / sacra facit, cultrosque in guttura velleris⁵ atri / conicit, et patulas perfundit sanguine fossas.⁶ In Met. 9, 295 sq., when Alcmene narrates her sufferings at the birth of Hercules, she tells how Juno subsedit in illa / ante fores ara, dextroque a poplite laevum / pressa genu et digitis inter se pectine iunctis / sustinuit partus. tacita quoque carmina voce / dixit, et incoeptos tenuerunt carmina partus.⁷ We may also note

¹ Cf. Rohde, Psy. 2, 79, and n. 1.

² The reason given is: *ξυνεκδοθῆναι ἂν τῷ ἐμβρύῳ τὴν μήτραν*.

³ Cf. Paul. ex Fest., p. 77; Prel.-Jord. R. M. 1, 377; 2, 93.

⁴ For the mortar, cf. Cato de agr. cult. 127; an interesting parallel among the people of the island of Thanet, cf. F-L Jour. 5, 1894, p. 23. For the axe, cf. Pallad. 1, 35, 1; it was also used in divination, *ἄξινομαντεία*; Pl. 30, 14; cf. the *ὄλμος*, Aristoph. Vesp. 201, 238 and Schol.; Zenob. 3, 63.

⁵ For the ram as spirit offering, cf. Dion. Hal. A. R. 4, 22; Frazer on Paus. 5, 13, 2; 9, 39, 6.

⁶ Offerings to the dead were commonly made in a ditch; cf. Hom. Od. 11, 24 sq.; Stat. Theb. 4, 559; 11, 63; cf. below.

⁷ For this belief, cf. Pl. 28, 59; and 28, 42.

Ovid's statement, *Met.* 11, 605, concerning the palace of *Somnus*: ante fores antri fecunda papavera florent/innumeraeque herbae, quarum de lacte soporem/Nox legit et spargit per opacas umida terras. One of the charges which *Apuleius* refutes in his *Apology* (58), is that in the vestibule of a house rented by a friend of his, whom he often visited, were found quantities of bird feathers, and the walls were blackened by smoke,—facts which his accusers asserted were evidence of his "nocturna sacra". It may be noted, too, that just as the threshold was the proper seat in *Hades* of the *Furies*,¹ so when they visited the living, they took their seat upon the threshold; the *Dirae* in *Verg. Aen.* 4, 473; *Allecto* in *Aen.* 7, 343; *Tisiphone* in *Ov. Met.* 4, 485; cf. *Stat. Theb.* 5, 69. When there was danger of pollution, too, the threshold was washed with water, as in *Ov. Fast.* 6, 155 sq., when the house is purified after the entrance of the "striges". And *Prop.* 4, 8, 84, represents *Cynthia* as washing the threshold with pure water after the visit upon him of the two "ladies of easy virtue". It was "in limine sacro" also, that the inhabitants of *Egnatia* tried to persuade *Horace* and his companions (*S.* 1, 5, 99), that incense would burn without fire.² It is important to note, also, that it was "ad limina" that the *Penates* appeared to *Aeneas* when they, bearing *Apollo's* message, bade him leave *Crete* for the West (*Verg. A.* 3, 155). Similarly *Helenus* stands "ad limina" when he makes his prophecy to *Aeneas* (*ib.* 3, 371); and the *Sibyl* is before the threshold of her cave when she receives the divine inspiration (*ib.* 6, 45; cf. 115; 151). *Ovid*, *F.* 3, 358, also tells us that *Numa* and his people took their stand "ante limina regis" when at sunrise³ they were awaiting omens from *Jupiter*. Perhaps these passages may serve to explain *Hom. Od.* 8, 80: ὡς γὰρ οἱ <'Αγαμέμνονι> χρείων μυθήσατο Φοῖβος 'Απόλλων/Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ ὄθ' ὑπέρβη λαῖνον οὐδὸν/χρησόμενος. The expression can hardly mean simply, "he entered the temple".

¹ Cf. *Verg. Aen.* 6, 555; *Ov. Met.* 4, 453 sq.; cf. *Gruppe*, *G. M.* 405.

² Cf. *Pl.* 2, 240, who, however, says nothing of a threshold. For attempts at explanation, cf. *Maclean's* note. The point here is that the "sacrum limen" was chosen as the spot to perform the miracle.

³ The early morning was the favorite time for the performance of magic rites; cf. *Pl.* 29, 85, 91; *Riess*, *Pauly-Wiss.* 1, 38 sq. In *Sicily* it is still the custom to go out before the house-door on the first Monday of the month to take auguries; cf. *Pitré*, *Tradiz. Sicil.* 17, p. 253.

These citations would seem to indicate that the threshold was thought to be the source of prophetic inspiration, and we may compare the familiar grave-oracles (Rohde, *Psy.* 1, 186 sq.), and the belief that the spirits of the dead foretold the future (cf. Herod. 4, 149; 5, 92, 7; Plat. *Leg.* 10, 909 B; Verg. *A.* 10, 33; Diog. Laert. 8, 1, 32; August. *de civ. dei* 7, 35). It is, moreover, only by reference to this belief in the presence of spirits round the door-way, that we can explain the Roman custom of laying the dying before the door (Serv. ad *Aen.* 12, 395). *Ut extremum spiritum redderent terrae* is Servius' explanation, but they were laid before the door and not elsewhere,¹ as is the custom among other peoples, because here was the haunt of spirits, especially, as I shall try to point out below, of the family spirits.

To be mentioned here is the custom referred to by Hesych. s. v. ὠπωτήρη: διὰ φαρμάκων εἰώθασί τινες ἐπάγειν τὴν Ἑκάτην ταῖς οἰκίαις, πῦρ πρὸ θυρῶν, with which may be compared id. s. v. ὀπι ἀνασσα, πυρρὰ πρόθυρος πῦρ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν. Bergk, *PLG* 3, p. 682, by supposing that these passages really belong together, thinks that they refer to a custom described by Theodoret. 1, 352, ed. Sirmond, according to whom it was a yearly practice in some cities to light fires in the streets through which men and boys leaped, and even small children were carried for the purposes of purification. This makes the rite comparable to the fire ceremonies which are common in various parts of the world.² This may be correct, but it is sufficient for my purpose to take the statements of Hesychius as they stand: that at times fires were built before the house-doors and Hecate invoked,³ proof enough that we are dealing with spirits.⁴ If Opis = Artemis,—and of their close relationship there can be no doubt,⁵—and if Opis, as Hesychius implies, was, like Hecate, concerned in the above rite, the fact furnishes further evidence of the connection of

¹ Cf. Mau, *Pauly-Wiss.* 3, 347. Remarking that Serv. explanation is correct, he adds: "nur dass deshalb der Sterbende nicht gerade vor die Thür gelegt zu werden brauchte". Parallel practices in Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, pp. 26 sq.

² Cf. Gruppe, *Gr. M.* 892, n. 4.

³ In Lucian, *Necyom.* 9, the Magus holds a burning torch when he invokes Hecate. Torches hung on door at wedding, Bion 1, 88.

⁴ For Hecate in connection with magic, cf. Steuding, *Roscher's Lex.* 1, 1894.

⁵ Cf. Crusius, *R. Lex.* 1, 2811 sq.; Höfer, *ib.* 3, 927 sq.

Hecate and Artemis with each other and with the house-door.¹ Their statues were set up in front of it² and both bore the name Prothyraia.³ We may suppose, too, that before these statues of Hecate, as before those on the cross-roads, were cast the remains, as offerings, of substances which had been used in purificatory ceremonies.⁴ Similarly statues of Hermes were set up on the cross-roads and before doors, which as Hermes Strophaios or Thyraios,⁵ he protected and from which he kept out ill.⁶ The same is true also of the conical pillars of Apollo Agyieus, and this god likewise bore the name Thyraios.⁷ In Rome, also, the threshold had its protecting deities, Janus, Forculus, Limentinus, Cardea, and others.⁸ The Lares afford even a closer parallel to these Greek gods, for their statues were likewise set up on the cross-roads⁹ and, although in the family cult, they were commonly placed within the house near the hearth, we have plenty of evidence to show that they were also placed at the entrance to the house.¹⁰

These facts are sufficient surely to warrant the conclusion that round the threshold spirits were thought to gather,—a belief to which the superstitions of many peoples furnish striking analogies.¹¹ They point, moreover, to an evident connection between

¹ Cf. Roscher's *Lex.* 1, 571 sq.; 781 sq.; Gruppe, *Gr. M.* 1289, n. 2.

² Cf. Aristoph. *Vesp.* 804; Aeschyl. fr. 378 N; Gruppe, *Gr. M.* 1289, n. 2.

³ Cf. Hesych. s. v. *ἐκάραια*; Orph. *hy.* 2, 12; Gruppe 1296, n. 1.

⁴ Cf. Phot. s. v. *ὁξυθίμια*; Rohde, *Psy.* 2, 79, n. 1; Steuding, l. l., 1889; cf. above, p. 258. Suggestive is Stat. *Theb.* 9, 818: *cultus Triviae pendebitis alto/limine, captivis matrem donabo pharetris.*

⁵ Cf. *R. Lex.* 1, 2382; Gruppe, 1337, n. 6; Usener, *Rh. M.* 29 (1874), p. 27; 58 (1903), 163 sq.; Eitrem, *Hermes u. d. Toten*, 1 sq.

⁶ Aristot. *Oec.* 1, 6, p. 1345; Schol. Aristoph. *Plut.* 1153; Hermes and Hecate seem also to have been connected in the house cult; cf. Lobeck, *Aglaoph.* 1007, n; 1335 sq.; Eitrem, p. 9; and Hermes, as H. Chthonius, like Hecate, associated with the spirits of the dead; cf. Rohde, *Psy.* 1, p. 238; Eitrem, pp. 41 sq.

⁷ Aristoph. *Eq.* 1320; Frazer on Paus. 1, 31, 6.

⁸ *Tert. de Idol.* 15; *Prel.-Jord.* 2, 217.

⁹ Cf. Wissowa, *R. Lex.* 2, 1872 sq.; De Marchi, *Il Culto Priv. d. Roma Ant.* 1, pp. 29 sq.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ov. F.* 1, 136; Hieronym. in *Esaiam* 6, 57; Marq.-Momm. *Staatsv.* 3, 126, n. 1; *Privatl.* 240. Similar evidence from the houses at Pompeii, cf. De Marchi, pp. 80 sq.

¹¹ The ancient Hindoos believed that spirits haunted the threshold; cf. Oldenberg, *Rel. d. Veda* 561; so the Germans, Wuttke, *D. Volksab.*, p. 89;

the threshold and the cross-roads, which are also the common haunt of spirits, not only in Greek and Latin lore, but in that of widely scattered peoples.¹ This connection is to be inferred from the Hecate-cult² and that of the Lares, at whose festival, the Compitalia, figures of wool were hung both on the house-doors and the cross-roads;³ on the cross-roads, too, as on the threshold and near the door, were performed all sorts of magic rites.⁴

Many of the practices connected with the house-door seem to point to a cult which was originally no doubt directed to the spirits that were always near by. A Roman bride had to bind the door-posts of her husband's house with wool and smear them with fat or oil.⁵ The woolen figures, which were hung before doors on the Compitalia evidently originated as a substitute for human sacrifice to these spirits "ut vivis parcerent et essent his pilis et simulacris contenti" (Fest. ep., p. 239, 1). So in Greece, at the time of childbirth, wool or olive branches were hung on the doors,⁶ and at the Ephebia, laurel was hung there.⁷ This custom was also usual at Roman weddings and at other times,⁸ and cypress branches were hung before the door when a corpse lay within.⁹ It was both a Greek and Roman custom to lay

in Russia the Domovoi, or "house-spirit", has his seat there; cf. Spectator (London), June 18, 1892; the house fairies, according to Irish belief; Croke, F-L of No. India, 1, 241; cf. p. 203. So the Hebrew Elohim, Riess, A. J. P. 18, p. 191.

¹ Cf. Oldenberg, op. cit., 267 sq.; Wuttke, op. cit., p. 89; Samter, op. cit., pp. 120 sq.; Pradel, Griech. Gebete, 96.

² Cf. above, and Rohde, Psy. 2, 79, n. 1; Gruppe, G. M., p. 1291, n. 1.

³ Cf. Fest. ep., p. 121, 17; Macr. S. 1, 7, 34; Prel.-Jord. 2, 111; Samter, op. cit., pp. 111 sq.

⁴ Their important place in the cult of Hecate is sufficient proof of this; cf. Theophr. Ch. 16; Hor. S. 2, 3, 281; Tibul. 1, 3, 11 sq.; 1, 5, 56; cf. Eitrem, op. cit., 40. For similar practices among the ancient Hindoos, cf. Gob. Grih. Sut. 2, 1, 4 (SBE 30, p. 42); ib. 2, 4, 2 (SBE, p. 49); Bloomfield, A. Veda, p. 519.

⁵ Pl. 29, 30; 28, 135; 142; Luc. Phar. 2, 355; Serv. Aen. 4, 458; Prel.-Jord. 2, 217; Samter, 80 sq.

⁶ Hesych. s. v. στέφανον ἐκφέρειν.

⁷ Cf. E. M. 531, 54; Samter, pp. 86 sq.

⁸ Cf. Juv. 6, 79 c. Schol.; Luc. Phar. 2, 354; Sen. Thyest. 54; Tert. ad uxorem, 2, 6; cf. the use of laurel on tomb-stones, C. I. L. 6, 10328; cf. A. J. P. 31 (1910), 293 sq.

⁹ Serv. Aen. 3, 64; 681; 4, 507; cf. Prel.-Jord. 2, 93; Rohde, Psy. 1, 220, n. 1.

sacrificial gifts upon the threshold or hang them on the doors,¹—evidently as an altar. As an altar, too, Aeneas (Verg. Aen. 6, 636), when he had purified himself with water before entering the Elysian Fields, fastened the Golden Bough on the threshold in front of him. As an altar, too, the threshold served as a place of refuge for the suppliant and distressed;² cf. Valer. Max. 2, 10, 2: qui postes ianuae tamquam religiosissimam aram sanctumque templum venerati. And one of the precepts of Pythagoras was that the doors should be kissed fondly by those who enter or depart,³ and Porphyry. de ant. nym. 27 remarks of his followers: οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι καὶ οἱ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις σοφοὶ μὴ λαλεῖν ἀπηγόρευον διερχομένους ἢ πύλας ἢ θύραν. In Tibull. 1, 2, 84, part of the lover's penance is: "dare sacratis oscula liminibus" of Venus' temple; so in 1, 3, 29 sq. Delia is to sit, clad in linen, when paying her vows, before the sacred doors of the temple of Isis; cf. Stat. Theb. 9, 606 of Atalanta at the shrine of Diana: "limine divae/astitit et . . . precatur"; cf. ib. 6, 636; Petron. 133, 3. This sacredness is emphasized also by the fact, recorded in a fragment of Menander, Inc. 740 K. that people swore "by the doors":⁴ μαρτύρομαι, ναὶ μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τοντονὶ/καὶ τὰς θύρας.

Several theories⁵ have been advanced to explain the general belief in the sacredness of the threshold, and to account for the

¹ Herod. 1, 90; Verg. Aen. 10, 620; 4, 202; Prop. 4, 3, 17; Tibull. 1, 1, 15; Stat. Theb. 10, 344; Apul. M. 6, 3; for this custom among other peoples, cf. Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 120 sq.

² Cf. Hom. Il. 9, 581 sq.; Ap. Rh. 4, 26; Verg. Aen. 2, 490; 673; 3, 351; 11, 483; Ov. M. 1, 376; 13, 412; Livy 45, 44, 20; Sen. Phaedr. 860; Valer Fl. 1, 676; Juv. 6, 47; Stat. Theb. 3, 688.

³ Mullach, Fr. Ph. Gr. 1, p. 510; cf. Herod. 2, 121 of a similar Egyptian custom; and for parallels elsewhere, Trumbull, op. cit., pp. 12, 31, 116, 123, 130.

⁴ Cited by Riess, A. J. P. 18, 191.

⁵ According to Trumbull, pp. 1, 98, the primitive altar of the family was on the threshold, and "when first a twain were made one in a covenant of blood the threshold altar of the race was hallowed as the place where the author of life met and blessed the loving union". It has also been suggested that "the threshold marks the limit which separates the friendly house-spirits from the vagrant hostile ghosts"; or "that both the threshold and the foundation stone (both possibly originally identical) were analogues of the Ashma stone of India, and of the Churinga of the natives of Australia; in short that they represented the sacred stones in which the ancestral spirit was confined"; Crooks, l. l.

superstitions connected with it, but these fail to give any satisfactory explanation for the presence of spirits in its neighborhood. This can only be accounted for, it seems to me, by the wide-spread custom of burying the dead under the threshold or before the door,¹—a custom which, I think, can be shown to have prevailed among the ancient Greeks and Romans.²

We know, in the first place, that in early Greece bodies were buried inside the dwelling. Ps.-Plato, *Min.* 315 D expressly tells us that this was the ancient custom,³ and at Thoricus, Aegina, and elsewhere⁴ graves have been found in the floor and walls of houses. That the Greeks also buried their dead under the threshold and before the house-door we must conclude from the following evidence: Neoptolemos was buried under the threshold⁵ of the temple at Delphi (*Schol. in Pind. Nem.* 7, 62). In the *Hel.* of Euripides 1165 sq. Theoklymenos addressing the tomb of his father says *ἐπ' ἐξόδοισι γὰρ | ἔθαψα, Πρωτεύ, σ' ἔνεκ' ἐμῆς προσήψεως*. The custom, too, of placing the shrines of heroes before the house-door would seem to point to a more primitive time when the dead body itself was buried there;⁶ and with these heroes, perhaps, should be classed the "antelii daemones"⁷ spoken of by Tert. *de idol.* 15, cf. *de cor. mil.* 13, as guardians of the doors among the Greeks. It may be noted, too, that altars were commonly erected both before the house and temple

¹ Cf. Lippert, *Relig. d. Eur. Culturv.* 135; 309 sq.; Hittell, *Mankind in Anc. Times* 1, 257 sq.; Preuss, *Die Begräbnisart d. Amer. u. Nordostas.* pp. 30 sq.; Trumbull, p. 25.

² This theory was suggested by Winternitz, l. l., in order to account for the lifting of the bride, the purpose of which was, he concludes, "dem Zauber der sich an die Schwelle heftete, zu entgehen". And after I had gathered the material for this paper, there appeared the article by Eitrem referred to above, in which he adopts this theory not only to explain the superstitions connected with doors, but primarily the character of Hermes as god of the dead. The custom of placing the statues of Hermes before the door, on the boundaries and cross-roads, was due to the fact that "Hermes wird da verehrt, wo man die Toten begraben hat". Cf. my review in *A. J. P.* 31 (1910), pp. 93 sq.

³ Cf. *Plut. Phoc.* 37; Rohde 1, 228, n. 3; 2, 340, n. 3.

⁴ Cf. *Frazer, Paus.* v. 2, p. 533; v. 5, 591; Eitrem, pp. 4 sq.

⁵ Cf. the custom of burying in and under the city gate; *Paus.* 5, 4, 4, with *Frazer's* note; *Herod.* 1, 187; Rohde 1, 160 and notes.

⁶ Cf. *Herod.* 6, 69; Kaibel, *epigr.* 84; ref. in *Lobeck, Aglaoph.* 1335 sq.; Rohde 1, 197, n. 2.

⁷ Cf. *Pauly-Wiss.* under the words; cf. *Clem. Alex. Protr.* 4.

threshold,¹ and it was on these altars that all blood offerings were made.²

In order to show that similar burial customs were current among the early Romans, we have to rely chiefly upon analogy, for literary evidence is scanty and by no means convincing. The only references for Roman burial within the house are Serv. Aen. 5, 64;³ cf. 6, 152, and Isid. Or. 15, 11, 1; for burial near the house door, a statement by Fulgentius⁴ that children under forty days old⁵ were buried under the eaves of the house on the yard side. We know, however, that in Rome, as in various cities in Greece,⁶ burial was permitted within the city, for graves of the fourth century have been found within the Servian Wall;⁷ and the analogies between Roman customs and beliefs in connection with the house door should have sufficient weight to warrant the conclusion that, at some time in their history, they practiced the same burial customs. If the worship of the Lares developed, as I believe, out of ancestor worship, the placing of their statues before the house door would form a parallel to the Greek custom

¹ Cf. Aeschyl. Supp. 494; Eurip. Andr. 1098; Saglio in Darem.-Sagl. Lex. s. v. ara, I, 348.

² Cf. Ov. Met. 7, 60r (cf. above, p. 259); ib. 10, 224; Saglio, l. l.

³ Domi suae sepeliebantur unde orta est consuetudo ut dii penates colerentur in domibus. Cf. De Marchi, op. cit., I, 38.

⁴ P. 560, 13 Merc. (cf. ed. Helm, p. 113, 19); cf. the Lares grundules, Arnob. I, 28; Wissowa, Relig. d. R., p. 153, n. 6; De Marchi, l. l. The above references, according to Marq.-Momm. Staatsv. 3, 309, n. 1; Fowler, Clas. Rev. 10, 395; 11, 34 sq.; Rohde, Psy. I, 228, n. 3, are not conclusive; they are accepted by Voigt, R. Alterth., pp. 794-5; De Marchi, l. l.

⁵ In Russia still-born children are buried under the threshold, cf. Ralston, Folk Songs of the Russ. People 136 sq. The fact that Verg. A. 6, 427 puts the souls of little children on the threshold of Hades, may point to a primitive custom of actual burial under the threshold of the home; cf. Conington's note on this passage, and King, Cl. Rev. 17, 83 sq. The excavations at Tell Ta'annek in Palestine show that the ancient inhabitants of this region buried young children in the house; cf. Sellin, Denkschr. d. Wien. Akad. phil.-hist. Kl. 50 (1904) IV, pp. 33 sq.; 36. The wide-spread belief in rebirth, and such an idea as that of the Algonquin Indians, who would bury little children by the wayside, "that their souls might enter into mothers passing by, and hence be born again", would furnish the reason for such burial customs; cf. Dieterich, Mutter Erde 21 sq.

⁶ Cf. Paus. 5, 4, 4, c. Frazer's note; Bekker, Char.², 3, 105 sq.; Eitrem, pp. 4 sq.

⁷ Cf. Jahrb. d. Arch. 22, 1908, p. 443; Mon. Ant. 15, 1905, p. 752; De Marchi, l. l.; Cic. de leg. 2, 58.

in regard to the heroa.¹ The statues of famous men, at all events, were placed there, and the fact that the "hostium spolia" were affixed to them² points to an earlier cult: cf. Pl. N. H. 35. 7: *aliae foris et circa limina animorum ingentium imagines erant adfixis hostium spoliis quae nec emptori refigere liceret, triumphabantque etiam dominis mutatis emptae domus*; cf. Verg. Aen. 7, 177 sq.³

There are, moreover, convincing evidences that the cult which, as the examples quoted above show, was connected with the threshold and the door, can have been concerned, in origin, at least, only with the spirits of the dead. This we must conclude to be the meaning of the binding of the door-posts with wool, which was used frequently in purificatory and other rites connected with the dead,⁴ and the practice of smearing them with fat and oil which were sprinkled, evidently as offerings, upon graves and grave-stones;⁵ so the olive, laurel, and cypress were closely associated with the cult of the dead, and were commonly placed on graves.⁶ This is true of lamps, also, which were so frequently placed before doors.⁷ The *χθόνια λουτρά*, too, the "aqua adferea" or "adferial" of the Romans,—the water,

¹ Cf. above, pp. 262, 265. Compare the explanation of the ancients themselves that the Lares=Manes or *ἡρώες*; Arnob. 3, 41; Dion. Hal. 3, 70; 4, 2, 14; Wissowa, op. cit., p. 153; Prel.-Jord., R. My. 2, 102 sq.

² Or to the door-posts: cf. Tibull. 1, 1, 54; Prop. 3, 9, 26; Hor. Od. 4, 15, 6; Pers. 6, 45; Stat. Theb. 3, 581; so on the doors of Cacus' cave (Verg. A. 8, 196), human heads were hung.

³ The Greek and Roman custom of laying the dead body out near or upon the threshold may have been a survival of primitive burial there; cf. Hom. Il. 19, 212; Schol. Arist. Lys. 611; Ter. Phor. 97; Verg. A. 11, 29; Pers. 3, 105.

⁴ Cf. Alciph. 3, 37; Diels, Sibyl. Blät. 70; Samter, l. l., 37 sq.; Gruppe, Gr. M. 892, n. 1.

⁵ Cf. Plut. Arist. 21; Eurip. Iph. T. 633; Samter 82 sq.; cf. too, the custom of anointing stones and other fetishes with oil; Lang, Cust. and Myth. 52; Usener Rh. M. 50, 147.

⁶ The dead were laid out upon olive branches, Pl. 35, 160; cf. Ael. v. h. 6, 6; Plut. Lyc. 27; cf. their use in purificatory rites, Soph. O. C. 484. For laurel wreaths sculptured on tombs, cf. C. I. L. 6, 10328; in purification, cf. Schol. Eurip. Alc. 98; Pl. 15, 135; cf. Eurip. Ion 102 sq. Cypress grew in the lower world, Petron. 120, 75; in haunted groves, Sen. Thyest. 654; Stat. Theb. 4, 459; on graves, Paus. 8, 14, 4.

⁷ Cf. Tert. de idol. 15; apol. 35; placed on graves, Petron. 111, 4; cf. Diels, l. l., 47 sq.

namely, in which the dead body was washed and which was poured upon the grave as an offering,¹ was also as a spirit-offering, as I believe, poured out before the house-door. This is indicated, it seems to me, by a fragment of Aristophanes, *Her.* 306 K: *μήτε ποδάνιπτρον θύραζ' ἐκχεῖτε μήτε λούτριον*. Pouring this water before the door was thought to prevent the return of the soul,² but the explanation of this belief can only be that this water was originally an offering to the soul, which, like all spirit-offerings, by satisfying its needs prevented its return.³ These *χθόνια λουτρά* are similar in nature to the *ἀπόνιμμα*,⁴—the blood of a sacrificial victim which was washed off from those who underwent purification, and poured into a trench to the west of a tomb, with the words, *οἷς χρὴ καὶ οἷς θέμις*; a sacrifice to the dead could not be more clearly indicated. Similar, too, is the offering of black ram's blood made by Medea in *Ov. Met.* 7, 243 (cf. above, p. 259, and *Hos. Geta Med.* 322 sq.), an offering which she pours in a trench near the house-door.⁵ The custom, indeed, of burying substances under the threshold must have originated in the idea that they were offerings to the dead, and it was because they were offerings and satisfied the needs of the spirits that they came to be considered prophylactic. Nothing could speak more eloquently for the truth of this statement than the words of *Ov. F.* 2, 573, in his account of Tacita: "et digitis tria tura tribus sub limine ponit/qua brevis occultum mus sibi fecit iter"; mice were daemonic beasts⁶ and "tus" was a common spirit offer-

¹ Cf. *Suid.* s. v.; *Hesych.* s. v.; *Diogen.* 8, 69; *Xenob.* 6, 45; *Lat. Thes.* s. v. *adferial*.

² Cf. *Riess, A. J. P.* 18, 191, to whom I owe the reference. He compares the similar Germ. custom, *Wuttke*, sec. 732; and modern Greek, *Wachsmuth*, d. *alte Gr. im Neuen* 119; 129.

³ An interesting parallel to these practices is furnished by two West Indian customs; cf. *F-L Jour.* 15 (1904), pp. 88, 206: "In Jamaica the water that washed dead body (sic) is thrown upon the grave. Elsewhere, however, when a person dies, the water in which the body is washed must be put on one side, and as the funeral leaves the house, it must be dashed after the hearse, otherwise the *duppy* will haunt the house".

⁴ Cf. *Athen.* 9, 404, E; *Harrison, Proleg.* 59 sq.

⁵ For this manner of making a sacrifice to the spirits of the dead, cf. *Stat. Theb.* 4, 442 sq., esp. 454 sq.; and see above, p. 259, n.

⁶ Cf. *Apul. Met.* 2, 22. On the mouse as chthonic, cf. *Gruppe, Gr. M.* 803, n. 1 sq.

ing.¹ This idea may not have been the only motive which led to this practice, but it is significant that of the substances which are mentioned in the examples quoted above,² the sheep, the ass, the dog, the sea-onion, the πανσπερμία,—and the cucumber which wrapped in wool was thrown before the door,—all occur as direct offerings to chthonic powers or in close connection with them.³ This relation between the threshold, the spirits of the dead, and the cross-roads where, I believe, the dead were also buried,⁴ may be further illustrated by the words of Plato, Leg. 933 A sq., where he speaks about the prevalence of the belief in magic: ταῖς δὲ ψυχαῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, δυσωπουμένους πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐκ ἄξιον ἐπιχειρεῖν πείθειν, ἄν ποτε ἄρα ἴδωσί που κήρινα μμήματα πεπλασμένα, εἴτ' ἐπὶ θύραις εἴτ' ἐπὶ τριόδοις εἴτ' ἐπὶ μνήμασι γονέων αὐτῶν τινες.

We may also, I think, if we accept this evidence for burial under the threshold or near the house-door explain the words of Eurip. Alc. 101: χαῖτα τ' οὖτις ἐπὶ προθύροις/τομαῖος ἃ δὴ νεκῶν/πένθει πίτνει. The shorn hair was heaped up at the door as the primitive place of burial just as it was commonly placed upon the graves of the dead.⁵ Interesting evidence for this is the story told by Herod. 4, 34. In describing the honors paid to the dead Hyperoche and Laodike by the Delians, he says: αἱ

¹ Cf. its use in charms, Verg. Ecl. 8, 66; Ov. M. 9, 154; cf. Heim, Incantamenta, p. 561; its use in funeral rites, Lactant. 1, 20, 26; 4, 18, 12.

² Pp. 254 sq. I omit the draco, but if Pl. means "anguis", for its chthonic character, cf. Gruppe, Gr. M., pp. 807 sq.

³ The sheep offered to spirits of the dead; cf. Lucret. 3, 52; Stat. Th. 4, 443; Luc. Nekyom. 9; to Hecate, Ap. Rh. 3, 1031. The ass was connected with Empusa, Suid. s. v.; with Typhon, Plut. Is. 30; cf. Gruppe, Gr. M. 797 sq.; was sacrificed to Trivia, Ov. F. 1, 391; to the winds, Hesych. s. v. ἀνεμώτας. The dog was sacrificed to Hecate: Theocr. 2, 12, c. Schol.; to the chthonic Mana, Pl. 29, 58, cf. Wissowa, Rel. d. Röm. 196; Deubner, AR. 13 (1910), 503 sq. The sea-onion was used in purification, Diphil. fr. 126 K; Luc. Nek. 7, cf. Rohde, Psy. 2, 406. The πανσπερμία was offered on the Chytroi, cf. Rohde 1, 238 sq. The cucumber occurs in a magic rite in Varro de R. R. 1, 2, 25, where every detail shows that it was used as a spirit-offering.

⁴ This is also Eitrem's opinion, op. cit., p. 11. He cites Kaibel, Epigr. 143, of a young child buried ἐπὶ τριόδῳ. We may note that, according to Plato Leg. 873 B the bodies of those who had committed suicide were cast upon the cross-roads and stones heaped upon them; cf. Jevons, Cl. Rev. 9 (1895), 247 sq. This custom, or that of burial upon the cross roads, may explain the reference to corpses in Petron. 134, 2 and Suet. Vesp. 5.

⁵ Aeschyl. Choeph. 4; Petron. 111, 9; Prop. 1, 17, 21; Sen. Phaedr. 1190; cf. Frazer, Paus. v. 4, p. 136; 2, 534.

<κούραι> μὲν πρὸ γάμου πλόκαμον ἀποταμνόμεναι καὶ περὶ ἄτρακτον εἰλί-
 ξασαι ἐπὶ τὸ σῆμα τιθεῖσι (τὸ δὲ σῆμά ἐστι ἔσω ἐς τὸ 'Ἀρτεμίσιον ἐσιόντι
 ἀριστερῆς χειρός, ἐπιπέφυκε δὲ οἱ ἐλαίη). It may be noted, too, that
 a threshold sacrifice, evidently founded upon a common folk
 practice, is preserved in Mag. Pap. V. III, 27. I may add, also,
 that this evidence for threshold sacrifice and for burial beneath
 the threshold receives strong confirmation from analogous cus-
 toms among other peoples, both Aryan and non-Aryan.¹

Such a conclusion affords a simple explanation for all the folk
 beliefs and practices connected with the house-door.² Spirits
 haunted the vicinity, as they wandered like shadows about
 tombs; (Plat. Phaed. 81 C sq.; Stat. Th. 9, 299; 12, 247 sq.;
 Lact. Inst. 2, 2, 6); because of the presence of these spirits of the
 dead the threshold, like the cross-roads, was a spot peculiarly
 adapted to the performance of magic rites, just as such rites were
 often performed on graves (cf. Plat. Leg. 933 A sq.; Pl. N. H.
 28, 226); it was bad luck to stumble on the threshold, just as it
 brought pollution to walk upon a grave (Plut. Lyc. 27; Sen.
 Troad. 492); the threshold as the source of prophetic inspira-
 tion is to be compared with the familiar grave-oracles (cf. Rohde,
 Psy. 1, 186 sq.), and the fact that the spirits of the dead foretold
 the future (Hor. S. 1, 8, 29; Stat. Th. 4, 635; August. de civ.

¹ In ancient India, "bali" offering made on the threshold, cf. Sacr. Bks.
 E. 2, 107; 30, 22. In Egypt, a hog, everywhere a chthonic animal, was
 annually offered to Osiris before the house-door, cf. Herod. 2, 48. In modern
 Greece a pomegranate is broken on the threshold at the time of marriage,
 Rodd, Cust. and Lore 95 sq. In Japan salt is sprinkled on the threshold
 after a funeral, cf. Griffiths, Mikado's Emp. 467; 470; cf. further Trumbull,
 op. cit., pp. 122 sq.; 27 sq. With the old Semitic custom of sacrificing a
 sheep upon the threshold of the house before a returned traveller could enter
 (cf. AR. 13 (1910), p. 80), may be compared the Gr. practice of compelling
 such a person to go through a symbolical rebirth, cf. Plut. Q. R. 5; Jevons,
 Cl. R. 9 (1895), 247 sq. In Rome he was made to enter the house through
 a hole in the roof, Plut. 1. 1.

² Here should be classed, too, the belief that the automatic opening of doors
 was a bad omen, although the house-door is not concerned; in Cic. de div. 2,
 31, 67 of a shrine of Hercules; in Suet. Jul. 81, cf. Jul. Obs. 127, fores cubiculi;
 Suet. Ner. 46 of the Maus. August.; Lamprid. vit. Comm. 16, of the temple
 of Janus; cf. Stat. Th. 7, 407 where the omen is "clausae—sponte fores."
 Similarly the trembling of doors denoted the presence of a god; cf. Verg. A.
 3, 90; 6, 82; Ov. Met. 4, 486; 15, 671; 9, 782; Stat. Silv. 3, 1, 164; Orph.
 Arg. 988.

dei 7, 35); offerings were placed upon the threshold or near the house-doors, and wreaths were hung thereon, as upon graves (Eurip. Iph. T. 633; Plut. Sol. 21; Catull. 101; Tibull. 2, 6, 31; 2, 4, 48; Prop. 3, 16, 23); the ground in the vicinity was holy ground, and a refuge for the distressed and suppliant as was the grave itself (Tibull. 2, 6, 33; cf. Rohde, l. l., 1, 230); and finally the teaching of Pythagoras that one should approach doors with due reverence finds its parallel in the statement that one must pass by a hero's shrine in silence (Arist. Av. 1490, c. Schol.; Alciph. 3, 58, 3).

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